

Hiawatha Police Launch No Text Campaign

I am drafting this letter in hopes of bringing public awareness to the ever growing wave of “distracted Drivers”. Distracted driving is no longer just the “latest buzzword”. It is a real problem with growing concerns. Kansas is cracking down on texting while driving with hundreds of Law Enforcement agencies around the state taking notice and stepping up enforcement efforts.

In Kansas it is unlawful to write, read or send texting messages while driving. This includes when the vehicle is stopped in traffic. As a driver, your attention must be devoted to the road and conditions around you at all times, not on TEXTING. As a driver, it is still illegal for you to send or read text messages while stopped in traffic or at a red light. So, a good rule of thumb is; if you are the driver and your vehicle is in gear, you must not read or send text messages.

The Hiawatha Police Department is taking a zero tolerance policy for texting and driving. In the coming months the Hiawatha Police Department will also be setting up educational events to aid in getting the word out.

Below are 11 facts about distracted drivers, courtesy of <http://safetextingcampaign.com/> :

Distracted driving facts

1. The No. 1 source of driver inattention is use of a wireless device (Virginia Tech/NHTSA)
2. Drivers that use cell phones are four times as likely to get into crashes serious enough to injure themselves (NHTSA, Insurance Institute for Highway Safety)
3. Distraction from cell phone use while driving (hand held or hands free) extends a driver's reaction as much as having a blood alcohol concentration at the legal limit of .08 percent (University of Utah)
4. 10% of drivers aged 16 to 24 years old are on their phone at any one time
5. Driving while distracted is a factor in 25% of police reported crashes and cost society about \$230 billion a year
6. Driving while using a cell phone reduces the amount of brain activity associated with driving by 37%
7. Of all cell phone related tasks - including talking, dialing, or reaching for the phone - texting while driving is the most dangerous.
8. A car driver dialing a cell phone is 2.8 times more likely to get into a crash than a non-distracted driver. (Virginia Tech)
9. A driver reaching for a cell phone or any other electronic device is 1.4 times more likely to experience a car crash.
10. A car driver talking on their phone is 1.3 times more likely to get into an accident.
11. For every 6 seconds of drive time, a driver sending or receiving a text message spends 4.6 of those seconds with their eyes off the road. This makes texting the most distracting of all cell phone related tasks. (Virginia Tech)

In closing, it is my goal to work closely with USD 415 to develop and implement a comprehensive

education and enforcement program for community.

Thousands of people have been killed by distracted drivers; hundreds of thousands have been injured. You can help stop distracted driving by, changing you're driving habits and help your family members do the same by learning about the dangers of distracted. (Curtesy of enddd.org)

Respectfully,

John A. Defore

Chief of Police

Many Signals Communications